

**UPDATES: *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2  
Nursery Detection and Control Program**

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**FEBRUARY 26, 2003**

On February 14, 2003, a letter to State Regulatory Officials was sent notifying them of confirmed U.S. detections of bacterial wilt disease caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 on geranium plants of Kenyan origin. The confirmations at that time were from a total of four greenhouses in the states of Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Lists of several hundred destination greenhouse nurseries that received plants from two different rooting stations in Michigan and New Hampshire, during shipping windows with the potential to contain infected Kenyan plant material, were compiled based on traceback information and information provided by industry. Hold notices and Emergency Action Notifications were, and are currently being issued to quarantine suspect plant material until conditions can be defined for symptom expression, sampling, and confirmation of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2. All confirmations to race 3, biovar 2 are made by our CPHST laboratory in Beltsville, MD after screening to the species level at State or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories. Since the initial notification to States, there have been two additional positive confirmations with a current total to date of one facility in Illinois, two in Indiana, two in Michigan, and one in Wisconsin. An action plan is in the final stages of development at PPQ headquarters in conjunction with the States, PPQ Regions, National Plant Board, and industry. The plan contains conditions to hold plant material, test it, release it if found to have no positive detections over a specified time and temperature period, dispose or destroy infected and associated plant material, and disinfect greenhouses with such material.

**MARCH 5, 2003**

The USDA "Action Plan for *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar Found in Nursery Facilities" was made available to States and industry on February 27, 2003. Since that time, federal and State inspectors have placed additional holds on plants at a majority of nursery facilities on the master list of approximately 800 establishments that fell within the windows of risk for having received geraniums potentially infected with *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2. In addition to the above 6 positives found in 4 states (IN, IL, MI, WI) reported previously, there have now been five total additional positives for *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 in three additional states: 2 in Georgia, 1 in Tennessee, 1 in Virginia and 1 in Wisconsin. There are a number of samples submitted that are still in the process of being screened to the *Ralstonia solanacearum* level at State or cooperating university diagnostic labs or are pending final determination to the race and biovar level at the USDA, APHIS, PPQ Beltsville, MD lab. Reporting of sample results is beginning to occur on a daily basis to the PPQ Regional offices and State offices. Several greenhouse establishments have been released if they conformed to criteria defined in the action plan.

**MARCH 12, 2003**

New detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 continue with additional states having positive testing facilities. The totals now stand as follows, with the number of nurseries in each state in parenthesis: Georgia (2), Illinois (1), Indiana (3), Iowa (1), Kansas (2), Maryland (2), Michigan (5), Missouri (2), New Hampshire (1), North Carolina (2), Tennessee (1), Virginia (3), and Wisconsin (2). Samples from these and other states continue to be submitted through state and cooperating university diagnostic laboratories to the CPHST laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland. Samples may take 3 or 4 days to get final results after the screening by the state. As of March 10, of the original 800 nursery locations to be held for receiving suspect geraniums of Kenyan origin, 108 have been released from further quarantine and 27 have tested positive.

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Those that tested positive are having geraniums from suspect shipments and commingled plant material destroyed with their facilities disinfected. The remainder are being held until time and temperature regimes can be met to allow disease symptom expression to appear.

**MARCH 19, 2003**

Because of concern about possible additional foreign shipments of geraniums infected with *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 2 biovar 2, a WTO Notice was prepared notifying countries of new phytosanitary certification requirements. Effective March 19, 2003, all imports of propagative material of *Pelargonium* spp. and *Solanum* spp. must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate which contains an additional declaration either that the consignment was produced in a facility that has been tested by an APHIS-approved test and found free of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2, or that *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 2 biovar 2 is not present in the country of origin. Of the countries currently importing geraniums to the US, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Kenya, and Mexico, have been notified of these new requirements. Spain, Israel, and Canada are in the process of being notified as well. An interim rule reflecting this change is in the final stages of approval.

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums from Kenya continue to be confirmed. As of March 17th, there are 17 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 43 establishments including the two rooting stations tallied by state:

AL (2), DE (1), GA (2), IA (3), IL (1), IN (4), KS (2), MD (3), MI (5), MN (2), MO (2), NC (6), NH (1), SC (3), TN (1), VA (3), WI (2). With some additional nurseries held because of trace forward investigations, there are still 730 nurseries on hold, 230 have been released, and 23 have taken control and disinfection actions. The remainder of positive testing facilities are making arrangements to take control and disinfection actions. Samples from plants with symptoms continue to arrive at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories (Pest Detection and Management Programs).

**MARCH 26, 2003**

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums from Kenya continue to be confirmed. As of March 26th, there are 20 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 71 establishments including the two rooting stations tallied by state: AL (5), AR(1), DE (1), GA (2), IL (3), IN (4), IA (3), KS (3), MD (3), MI (5), MN (4), MO (3), NC (8), OH (3), PA (1), SC (5), TN (1), TX (6), VA (6), WI (4). With some additional nurseries held because of trace forward investigations, there are still 763 nurseries on hold, 338 have been released. Those locations with positive testing facilities have taken or are making arrangements for control and disinfection actions. Samples from plants with symptoms continue to arrive at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories. An addendum to the *Ralstonia* action plan was sent to the field clarifying definitions and the actions to be taken for destruction.

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**APRIL 2, 2003**

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums continue to be confirmed. As of April 1st, there are 26 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 103 establishments including the two rooting stations tallied by state: AL (5), AR(2), CO(1), DE (1), GA (2), ID(1), IL (4), IN (4), IA (3), KS (3), KY(1), MD (3), MI (11), MN (4), MO (5), NH(1), NJ(1), NY(2), NC (12), OH (6), PA (4), SC (7), TN (1), TX (7), VA (8), and WI (4). With some additional nurseries held because of trace forward investigations, there are still 338 nurseries on hold with control actions taking place at 68 establishments and other locations with positive testing facilities are making arrangements for control and disinfection actions. Samples from plants with symptoms continue to arrive at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories. The *Ralstonia* action plan revisions, clarifications, and new information will be released soon in version 4 and posted on this website.

**APRIL 9, 2003**

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums continue to be confirmed. As of April 8th, there are 26 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 119 establishments, excluding the two rooting stations, tallied by state: AL (9), AR(2), CO(1), DE (1), GA (2), ID(1), IL (4), IN (4), IA (6), KS (3), KY(1), MD (3), MI (11), MN (4), MO (6), NH(1), NJ(1), NY(2), NC (12), OH (7), PA (8), SC (8), TN (1), TX (7), VA (10), and WI (4).

With some additional nurseries held because of trace forward investigations, there are currently 312 nurseries on hold with control actions having taken or are taking place at 82 establishments and other locations with positive testing facilities are making arrangements for control and disinfection actions. To date, 587 establishments have been released. Samples from plants with symptoms continue to arrive at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories. The *Ralstonia* action plan revisions, clarifications, and new information will be released soon in version 4. Two new features have been added to the USDA *Ralstonia* website. First, a link to the very informative University of Florida *Ralstonia* site has been added. Also, images of *Ralstonia* affecting tomatoes, potatoes, and tobacco have been posted in the *Ralstonia* Symptom Image Gallery at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep/ralstonia/gallery/index.html>.

**APRIL 16, 2003**

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums continue to be confirmed. As of April 14th, there are 26 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 123 establishments, excluding the two rooting stations, tallied by state: AL (9), AR(2), CO(1), DE (1), GA (2), ID(1), IL (4), IN (4), IA (6), KS (3), KY(1), MD (3), MI (11), MN (4), MO (6), NH(1), NJ(1), NY(3), NC (12), OH (7), PA (8), SC (8), TN (1), TX (7), VA (10), and WI (7).

With some additional nurseries held because of trace forward investigations, there are currently 148 nurseries on hold with control actions having taken, or are taking place at 112 establishments and other locations with positive testing facilities are making arrangements for control and disinfection actions. To date, 771 establishments have been released. The numbers of samples from plants with symptoms are slowing down in their arrival at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories.

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**APRIL 23, 2003**

Detections of *Ralstonia solanacearum* race 3 biovar 2 at nursery facilities that received suspect geraniums are being confirmed but on a much less frequent basis. As of April 21st, there are 26 States with positive confirmations as follows with the 124 establishments, excluding the two rooting stations, tallied by state:

AL (9), AR(2), CO(1), DE (1), GA (2), ID(1), IL (4), IN (4), IA (6), KS (3), KY(1), MD (3), MI (12), MN (4), MO (6), NH(1), NJ(1), NY(3), NC (12), OH (7), PA (8), SC (8), TN (1), TX (7), VA (10), and WI (7). There are currently 86 nurseries on still on hold with control actions having taken place at 122 establishments. Remaining locations with positive testing facilities are making arrangements for control and disinfection actions. To date, 833 establishments have been released. The numbers of samples from plants with symptoms are slowing down considerably in their arrival at the Center for Plant Health Science and Technology Beltsville laboratory after screening at the state or cooperating university diagnostic laboratories. The Action Plan is being revised based on substantial input from the field. PPQ will be releasing a new version revision after the season winds down and a program review is completed. An important update to the plan that is coming includes instructions from the PPQ Permit Unit to the diagnostic screening laboratories for the disposition of cultures and samples that may have been retained.